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YOUNG DR. HAMILTON

Mary A. Fisher

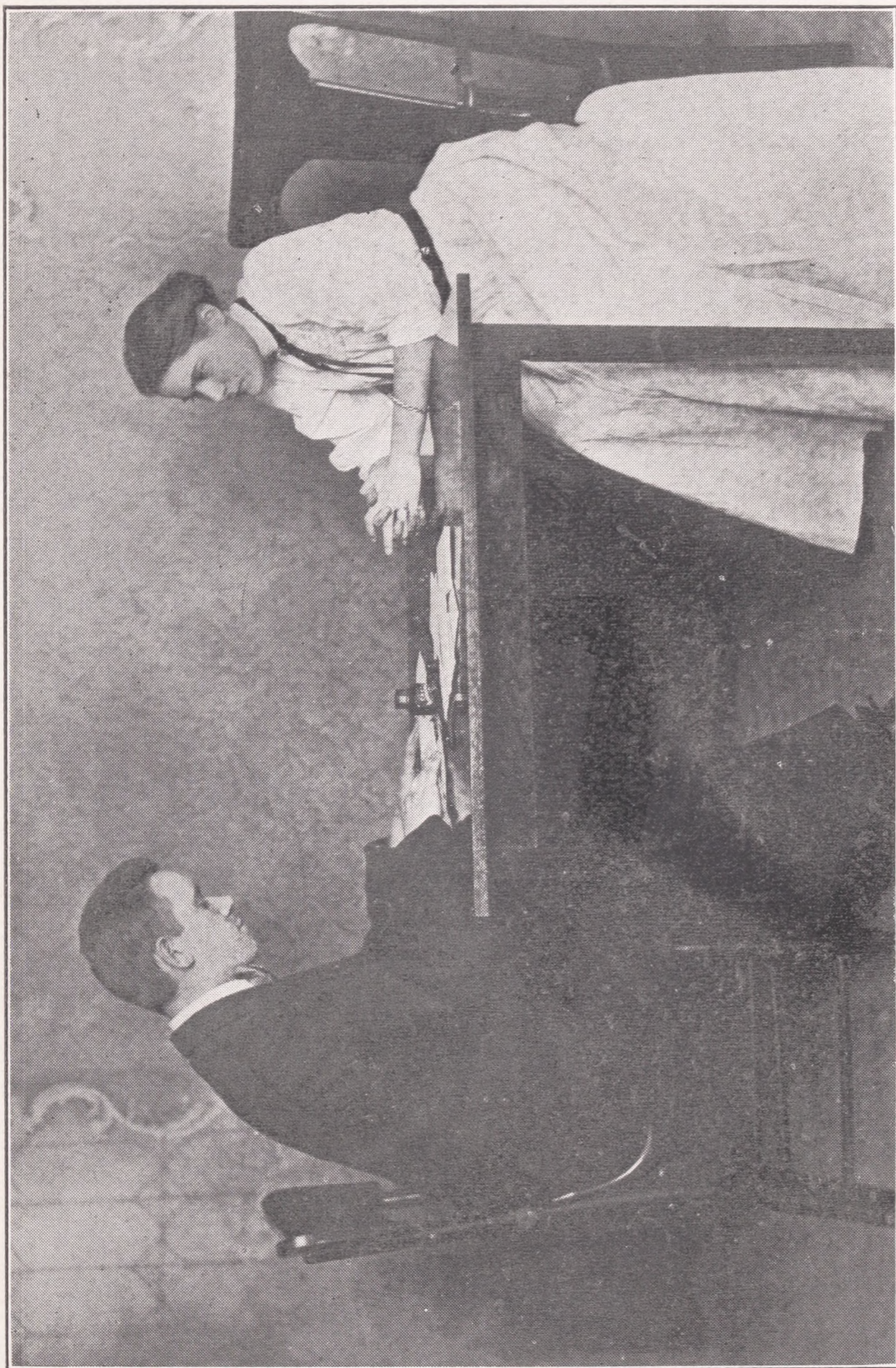


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“ And he was the only one who could tell her just what to do.”—Page 58.

YOUNG DOCTOR HAMILTON

BY

MARY A. FISHER

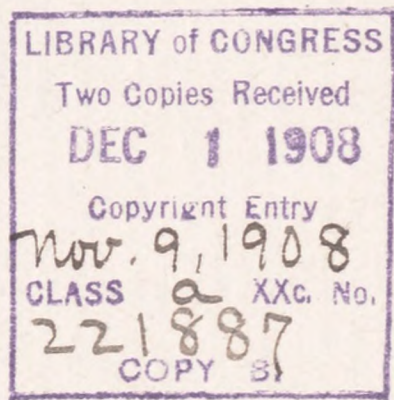
Author of "Louisa Forrester," Etc.



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To

MISS LAURA SAUNDERS,

of Mount Vernon, N. Y.,

This little book is affectionately inscribed by
THE AUTHOR.



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YOUNG DOCTOR HAMILTON

PART I.

Time—1902.

Place—The Red Lion Inn, Stockbridge, Mass.

CHAPTER I.

“What’s the matter? An accident?”

The speaker was a young man who stopped to address a group of people standing round an old gentleman who stood leaning on his cane beside a young girl seated on a stone holding an injured foot.

“I’m a physician. Can I be of use?”

The girl looked up at him tearfully. “Oh, I don’t know what to do. I’ve hurt my foot dreadfully,” she said.

To remove the shoe, tear his handkerchief into strips, and bandage the bleeding instep was the work of a few minutes.

“I can never walk back to the Inn, papa,” she said.

“Well, we must get a carriage, I suppose.”

“This boy will run for a carriage,” said the doctor.

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“So provoking that this should happen,” added the old gentleman testily.

“Papa, it was you who stumbled, and your cane with all your weight went on my foot.”

“Well, it’s no use talking now, here’s the carriage.

The young doctor lifted the lady in, and assisted the old gentleman into the opposite seat, saying: “That foot should be attended to at once, sir.”

“But our doctor who lives in Philadelphia is now somewhere in the mountains, isn’t he, Marcia?”

“But, papa, this gentleman’s a physician. Have you time, sir?” she added, looking at him imploringly. He handed her his card. She thanked him and handed it to her father.

“Oh! I see, you’re Dr. Hamilton. I’ve heard of you—saw your name somewhere. You better see what you can do for this foot of hers.” After fumbling in several pockets, he produced his card which bore the name, George T. Crane, Philadelphia.

“I’ll be with you in an hour, Miss Crane,” said the doctor, and the carriage drove off.

* * * * *

Marcia lay on a couch at their rooms at the Inn. The wounded foot had been carefully dressed, but was still painful.

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“And you say we must have a nurse, Dr. Hamilton?”

“You certainly must, sir.”

“But how are we to get one out here?”

“I may be able to send you one, Mr. Crane.”

“Oh! please do. I shall be so thankful,” said the young lady.

That evening a tall and rather attractive young woman called with Dr. Hamilton’s card, which introduced her as Miss Ethel Jewett—Nurse.

* * * * *

“It’s no easy matter to find vases enough for all the flowers sent in to you, Miss Crane,” said the nurse. “And here’s another box with a note attached, from that young Italian lawyer who sits and smokes with your father in the evenings.”

Marcia took the note. It opened into quite a long letter written on thin, foreign paper.

“I wish he wouldn’t trouble himself about me.”

“Your father told me to ask you when this gentleman might see you.” Miss Crane tore up the note. “Please drop this into the waste basket, and give me my desk, and I’ll write a final answer, and that must settle it.” There was a knock at the door and the nurse opened it to Dr. Hamilton.

“I was waylaid this morning, Miss Crane, by your Italian friend, who wanted to know how you were,” he said.

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“Please don’t tell him anything about me,” she answered.

“But I must give him a civil answer,” and the doctor laughed. “I understand that he’s a count in his own country, but waives that title here.”

“I’ve often met counts of no account,” replied Miss Crane.

“But this one’s of some account, I believe. I hear that his father is one of our wealthiest merchants, that he has an income of his own, and devotes most of his time to the Legal Aid Society, where he gives his services.”

“He’s awfully homely,” said Miss Crane.

“I’m sure his features are quite regular, and I should call him a good-looking chap.”

“His skin’s the color of coffee.”

“Not quite so bad as that.”

“We met him when we boarded at the Continental. Papa took a great fancy to him, and I’m sure I can’t tell why, and he followed us up here, and I was trying to avoid him when I hurt my foot.”

“As a punishment because you were trying to hurt his feelings.”

“I dislike his eyes. I don’t like such black eyes anyway. They always look treacherous to me. I’ve told Miss Jewett never to let him in here or I’ll never forgive her.”

“Then she knows what to expect. Now, Miss

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Jewett, I'm ready.'" He sat down by the injured foot. The nurse spread a towel over his knees. When the bandages were removed, he sat motionless gazing at the wounds. The nurse watched his countenance. She knew every expression of his intelligent face. She saw his brow contract, and knew that he found nothing encouraging. Then he roused himself and went to work. When the ordeal of the painful dressing was over, he said to his patient as he took her hand, "Now, Miss Crane, this foot will take time and patience."

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CHAPTER II.

About a week after the accident, as the doctor arrived at the Inn, he found an ambulance at the door.

“Miss Crane’s going away, doctor,” said a loquacious waiter who stood on the steps.

Dr. Hamilton’s first thought was one of surprise, almost of shock. Then for a second there was a feeling of relief, for no physician would have coveted the care of that foot with its complexity of crushed bones. Still again the pleasing personality of the girl lingered with him, and the large, full, dark eyes that had always greeted him with such perfect confidence—while her voice with its slight tinge of Southern accent had a subtle charm that floated in his brain, like the breath of some bewitching oriental essence, that he could not shake off, and he would not if he could. Then the hopelessness of a cure and the failure of his best effort faded off into the distance and only a sense of disappointment remained. Was it fair for her to be going without a word to him? As he reflected his eye fell on the inscription on the ambulance,—Dr. Polinski’s Sanitarium. He knew that man. He

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saw in a flash what would happen to his fair patient. He knew how that old Pole exulted in the use of the knife. He knew too that this girl's heart was too weak for the necessary anæsthetic. But what would he care for her agonies, when once he had his victim on the operating table? She would never come off it alive, and there would be the usual verdict that "the operation was perfectly successful, but so and so set in afterwards."

Those pleading eyes that had appealed to him when he saw her seated on that stone holding the injured foot might plead in vain to this Polinski, who was a disgrace to the profession. The thought of her in this man's power made him feel sick.

"Goin' up, Dr. Hamilton?" the elevator boy called out. The voice recalled him to himself, and he stepped in. He would go up to her, take her hand in his once again, and bid her good-bye. For more than this his lips were sealed.

On reaching Miss Crane's apartments he found her father and Dr. Polinski in close conversation at the half open door, also a fat woman, the head nurse from the sanitarium, who joined in the conversation, and urged the speedy removal of the young lady. As their backs were to him, he stood waiting to enter. There was a sound of some one sobbing, which was soon drowned by the old gentleman's voice calling out, "Now, Marcia, no more

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dilly dally, Dr. Polinski must know best. He says your life depends on that foot being attended to in a different manner, and he ought to know."

"But I don't want to go, papa. I want to stay here. Don't take me to a strange place, please don't."

"But I've made up my mind," said her father irritably, "You don't know what's best for you, and if you can't go willingly you must go unwillingly, that's all. It worries me so I don't know what to do."

He now moved aside, and Dr. Hamilton, taking advantage of the space, entered the room and went over to the sick girl.

Oh, Dr. Hamilton, I'm so glad you've come," said Marcia, and she held out her arms imploringly. "You're not tired of me, are you? You don't want to give me up, do you?" But her father came forward.

"Dr. Hamilton, I have consulted with my friends and have decided to place my daughter with a much older physician."

"Oh, papa, won't you listen to me?" and she burst into tears again. Here the young nurse stepped up to old Mr. Crane and putting her hand on his arm, said in a decided voice, "Mr. Crane, I understand that your daughter is twenty-two years old. She is no longer a minor and you have

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no right to force her to go away against her will. She has chosen her physician. I am appointed her nurse. I have charge of this room, and I ask you to go out and take these people with you, for if we cannot protect your daughter the law will, and if you don't leave us in peace, I shall send for the proprietor."

She opened the door wider, and with a little more parley, Mr. Crane shuffled out, followed by Dr. Polinski and his nurse. The doctor now went over to the sick girl, who took both his hands in her nervous grasp and laughed and cried hysterically. Her overwrought nerves had well nigh put her into a fever.

Finally she was quieted down, and as the nurse wiped away her tears, she said, "Dr. Hamilton, I'm sorry that papa spoke to you about an older physician. It was so ungrateful of him."

"Don't let that trouble you for one moment," he answered. "That opinion of your father's in favor of older physicians is one thing that we young doctors have to contend with."

"But some of the ladies here in the Inn tried to show him that it is the young doctors that have the advantages of all the modern discoveries which many of the old ones are unwilling to acknowledge."

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“Now, Miss Marcia, please let go my hands. I must see to the foot.”

“Then Ethel, lock the door. I’m so afraid they’ll come back.”

“It’s done already,” said the nurse.

“You’ve nothing to fear, Miss Marcia,” said the doctor.

Again she held his hand in her nervous grasp, and that half frightened look came into her face.

“Suppose they should come in the night and steal me away.”

“Now, you make us laugh. Remember Ethel’s a match for them. Promise me that you won’t worry any more, and I’ll be here in the morning.”

“I’ve given you lots of trouble, but I couldn’t help it. There was a look in their faces that frightened me.”

“I know it, but it’s all over now. Good-bye.”

The large, dark eyes were raised to his face with a look full of confidence and trustfulness. “You will come every day?” she asked.

“Yes, and when I can’t come, I’ll ’phone you.”

“I’ll have the ’phone put in this room, so your voice can come in here to me.”

“A good idea. You can have it right on this stand by you, and then you can talk to me yourself, if you care to. Good-bye.”

“Oh, Miss Jewett, come here. I want to hug

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you," said Marcia Crane as soon as they were alone. "I shall be grateful to you as long as I live." But the nurse did not hear. She was standing at the window watching the doctor as he went down the road until he was out of sight.

"I was thinking how nice it must be to be a nurse and work with Dr. Hamilton in the hospital," said Marcia.

Ethel's face brightened. "Yes?" she said.

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CHAPTER III.

Ethel Jewett was no ordinary girl. Few nurses of twenty-five had as good a record. Her profession was her religion, and her ideals were of a high order. Only the most severe cases satisfied her ambition. Of untiring zeal, she worked with a conscientiousness that never wavered.

There are some women who fascinate women as well as men, and Marcia Crane was one of them. Ethel Jewett found her the most charming patient she had ever met. During the long nights when Marcia could not sleep on account of the painful foot, she gladly forfeited much of her rest to amuse and entertain the patient, until there was a strong bond of love between them.

* * * * *

“Ethel!”

“Yes, Miss Marcia.”

“Do leave those pots and pans to the maid, and come and tell me something.”

“Tell you something? What can I tell you, dearie? Another hospital story?”

“No, no. Let me get my arms around you. Now lie down there—so. She lowered her voice almost

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to a whisper. "Tell me all you know—everything about Dr. Hamilton."

The nurse started back like one who had received a stab. A suspicion never dreamed of before flashed across her mind, and held her as in a vise. Several little incidents came cropping up to confirm it. She remembered that when she made Marcia's bed, she found the doctor's card under her pillow, and wondering how it came there, had removed it to the table, only to find it under the pillow again in the morning. Then Marcia had tired herself embroidering a monogram on a dozen handkerchiefs.

Was this wealthy girl to come between her and that one hope of her life? This Marcia, who could have everything, while she had only this? True, the hope had no foundation—no basis to rest upon, but no matter, she would not give it up—she could not! The doctor showed that he preferred her work to that of the other nurses, and didn't that mean something? Besides, perhaps, after all Marcia was nothing to the doctor any more than any other patient, so why need she worry? No matter how much Marcia thought of him, probably he would never know it.

* * * * *

She had now been away from Marcia two whole

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weeks, and there had been a substitute nurse in her place.

“How do you like your patient?” Ethel inquired as she hung up her hat in the lobby, when the other nurse came by with the supper tray.

“I think she’s lovely,” in her quiet, drawly voice. “But aren’t they related, she and the doctor?”

“Why, no, what put that into your head?”

“They seem so attached.”

“That’s a very stupid remark, I think Kitty,” and Ethel’s color rose, “the doctor’s interested in her as a patient of course,—nothing more.”

“Well, you needn’t be so snappish, Ethel Jewett.”

“Oh, well, Kitty, I’m sorry I spoke so. I didn’t mean to—I’m tired with that little four-year-old. I went because I’d promised his mother, and the poor child wouldn’t let the other nurses hold him.”

* * * * *

“Oh, Ethel, I’m so glad you’ve come. I’ve been waiting to tell you something so nice. I’m one of the happiest girls in the whole world! Of course you can guess why. But the doctor won’t speak to papa and I do so want to. I want every one to know about us. I think he’s just splendid. That first day when he tore up his handkerchief, and

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bound my foot so nicely, those honest blue eyes went down into my very soul, and have been there ever since. I'm so delighted that he has blue eyes. They have always been my favorites. His will be the first in our family. Ours are all dark, you know. But, Ethel, I hear the German ladies passing. Do slip out for water or something, and tell them."

The nurse did as directed. The wind gushing through the open door, blew a small vase off the mantelpiece.

"Oh, Miss Marcia, that Dresden vase that you said was so valuable is broken in many pieces. Can it be mended?"

Marcia laughed. "That's the very one that the doctor admired, isn't it? Never mind, Ethel. I've something more valuable to think about now than Dresden china. Besides, I can buy more, you know. I've my own money from my grandmother, and papa cannot touch it."

"It wouldn't have happened, Marcia, only you told me to move the flowers so you could see the clock."

"Well, of course, I want to watch the minutes. He'll soon be here now. Haven't you noticed what a cheery face he always comes in with and then in a few minutes he looks as grave as a judge. As though he had all the care in the world, and he

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answers in monosyllables. Here he is! I always know his knock now," said Marcia.

* * * * *

"So, Miss Jewett, you're back again," said the doctor. "I'm sure Miss Marcia's glad to see you," and going to the couch. "Miss Marcia, you're better to-day."

She smiled. "I'm always better when you're here."

"Of course. That's what I'm here for, isn't it?"

"I asked you not to wear that horrid gray suit. I like you in blue the best. You wore blue the first time I saw you."

"Marcia, dear, I forgot until I was dressed. But I will remember after this."

"You must. I want you always to wear blue."

"Are these your water-colors?"

"Yes. Mamma taught me to paint."

"Will you paint me something some day?"

"Would you care for it?"

"Of course, I would, ever so much."

Her eyes brightened, and a smile played over the pale face.

"But listen, doctor. Ethel knows everything."

"She does? I doubt it."

"I mean everything about us."

"Oh, that's different."

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“Are you going to speak to papa to-day?”

“No, Miss Marcia, I am not.”

“But why not?”

“Because I don’t wish to.”

“But I wish it.”

“I can’t help it. I thought we understood one another about that. You know what you promised me.”

“Oh! You’re such a tyrant. Anyway, Ethel told the German ladies and they will tell Martini, that Italian. I did so want him to hear it. You know his father married a rich Chicago woman, who has left him all her money, and of course he imagines that his title and money make him a great snap.”

“And this after your promise to me? Is that all a woman’s promise is worth?”

“It was Ethel. Besides, you said wait, and I waited a whole day. It was such a delicious bit of satisfaction because it was so presumptuous of him to follow me up here, with his horrid black eyes and coffee skin, and he made me get this accident.”

“And only for that I wouldn’t be here to-day.”

“But I know he’ll speak to papa about it, so I got ahead of you, didn’t I?”

A mischievous smile lit up her face.

The doctor smiled as he turned to the nurse.

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“Now to work,” he said. He took off his coat, and rolled up his sleeves above the elbow, Marcia’s eyes following every movement. Ethel, too, watched his face as he took off the bandages, and resting his hands on his hips, stood and gazed on the angry member that looked determined to baffle all medical skill.

His brow contracted. Ethel knew every expression of his strong, intelligent face. She had watched it so often. She saw he was troubled. Finally he sat down. Ethel spread the towel over his knees. She looked at Marcia. The blood had left her face. Her lips were tightly compressed, and her hands were clutching the slumber robe that covered her. Ethel understood that she was controlling herself with a supreme effort, for no sound escaped her lips.

The painful ordeal over, the doctor began the bandaging, the nurse assisting him.

The warm strength of his hands met the chill of her fingers as he passed the bandage round and round the injured foot. It always seemed to Ethel that no other doctor did this as he did,—that the earnestness of his work entered into the smallest detail. Finally the bandage had made its last round, and their hands met for the last time. It was so little—and yet to her it was so much.

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“Marcia, you’re the bravest girl I have ever known,” said the doctor.

A sweet smile lighted up the pale face.

Then he took the foot between his hands and pressed it gently.

“Oh, your hands soothe it so nicely,” said Marcia.

“Nurse, look out for the foot and we’ll raise her a little. There, isn’t that better?” as he smoothed the pillow.

“Oh, you have such nice, strong arms.”

“Of course I have, and they like to work for you.”

“But suppose I should never be able to walk again?”

“What of it? when my strong arms are able to carry you.”

“And you wouldn’t mind?”

“I wouldn’t mind. Why should I. That heavy hair of yours is always falling over your forehead and I like to see the whole of it. There, let it stay up so.” Marcia caught his hand as it toyed with her hair, and said, “Oh, if I could keep you here always!”

He poised himself on the edge of the couch. “Let me get my arm under you, there! Now put that little hand round my neck as you did yesterday. So! Now go to sleep, my brave darling.”

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Ethel Jewett sat by the window, but she was not looking out. Her eyes were riveted on the couch. She saw Marcia's fingers twined round his collar. She saw their lips meet. The room began to swim round. There was a mist before her eyes. Presently everything began to be tossed about as on billows drifting the doctor away—away from her.

“Nurse!”

The voice roused her. It was the doctor motioning to her to disentangle Marcia's fingers from his collar. Ethel's hands were nervous. Marcia murmured some protest in her semi-consciousness.

“Be careful,” he said. “Poor dear, she needs her sleep so much.” Then with his low, soft words again he soothed her into slumber once more. Giving a few directions, adding, “You have the morphia if you need it,” he passed out.

Marcia slept on. The nurse sat and reflected—that this wealthy girl should come between her and the hope that she hungered for—was it right? Was it just?”

Then she thought of the morphia needle. One little overdose to that frail girl with her delicate organism and she would sleep into the eternities.

As her thought rested on the hypodermic needle her memory recalled the story told by the head nurse in the training school of a nurse who, through jealousy and falsehood, caused the death

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of a patient, and although she gained her object, the ghost of the dead woman was constantly before her, and her life was a wretched one.

Ethel shuddered at the thought. But how much should the overdose be? She reached over to the mantel and found that the doctor, with his accustomed precaution, had left only one little dose. An audible sigh of relief escaped her. It was a cry of joy, of thankfulness, that he had placed Marcia beyond her power.

Throwing herself at the foot of the couch she burst into tears.

“No, no, Marcia! I’m not so base as that! It was only the temptation of a moment!”

It was far into the night when she went over to her little room. No penitent nun in sackcloth and ashes ever scourged her soul more than this loyal nurse as she wrestled with herself between her fitful slumbers.

When the morning dawned, she put her pillow at the window to dry, and refreshed by her bath, went to Marcia and put the room in order; brought in the flowers from the balcony and arranged them with unusual care.

* * * * *

“Ethel, dear!”

“Yes, Miss Marcia!”

“What a lovely sleep I’ve had. It must be be-

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cause I'm so happy. But I had a dream. I was in a far-off land where every one was full of joy, but it mystified me, and set me thinking, and while you were at breakfast, I've been busy. I want you to get two people to witness my signature. I've been drawing up a little will. Ask that lady and her cousin who came in yesterday. If anything happens to me, the doctor will have most of my property. It's right that I should leave it to the one I love best. Do leave those things and come here and let us talk. I want the doctor to speak to papa, but he won't. He keeps saying, 'Bye and bye.' Papa thinks so much of money, I'm sure it doesn't always make people happy. I can imagine the tiniest of flats with the biggest amount of happiness, can't you, Ethel? It's so strange how things happen! I tried once with all my heart to like a friend of papa's, because he'd set his mind on him for a son-in-law. But it was no use. And this time—well, in a couple of weeks, it seemed as though I had known the doctor always."

"Now listen, Marcia. I'm going to put you on your prettiest dress to-day, and your bracelets and make you look like a princess, when the doctor comes, and I've got a scarlet poppy for your hair. He likes you in scarlet. Now for the lotion."

"Oh, that horrid lotion! I shall ask the doctor to give it up; it smarts so."

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“You might as well try to move a mountain. He knows what to do and never wavers. You can see the strength in his face. That is the secret of his success. Come, dear, it must be done. You always bear it bravely when he is here. Besides, I’ll promise to tell you something nice; something about the doctor.”

“Will you really? Make haste, then.”

“Well, as I’ve told you, there is considerable flirting going on between the doctors and the nurses in a hospital, and last year a dear, good girl took it so seriously to heart that she is now in a convent for life, and Dr. Hamilton has turned him out of the hospital and has never spoken to him since. He despises anything so dishonorable.

* * * * *

“Look on the easel,” Marcia said, when the doctor came in the next day. “See, Ethel got your photo enlarged so that I could have it here by me when you’re not here. It was her own suggestion. She’s so good to me.”

“Ethel’s a goose as I told you before. I know her of old. Now, nurse, I’ve no time to lose,” said the doctor.

“That means that you’re going to stay only a stingy little while,” said Marcia, and I need you so much,” and her beautiful eyes filled.

“Let me put that cushion between your shoul-

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ders, and raise you up, then you won't look so like a mummy. Did you make that drawing for me?"

"I began it, but there are so many cottages for sale. I don't see why you want to build one."

"But I do. Is this the plan?"

"You are holding it upside down."

"What's this parallelogram?"

"That's the piazza. And there's the foyer hall, and that's the parlor, and——"

"Where's my office?"

"Oh! I forgot that."

"Thank you."

"I remember now that Ethel said to put it on the sunny side, because that hill is cold in the winter. Didn't you, Ethel?"

"Mind, I want a very nice plan that I shall not be ashamed to hand to the architect."

"Ethel looks thin and pale, doesn't she? I'm afraid that I'm a great tax on her."

"Of course you are, and on me, too."

"Ethel must have a room in our house, and come there whenever she's off duty."

"Of course she must."

"I'm going to fit up her room in blue, that's her color."

"Of course it is. Yes, we'll give her the blues—they become her," continued the doctor. "But,

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Marcia, a friend of mine is coming to see you to-morrow."

"A friend of yours? What for?"

"Because I wish it."

Marcia smiled. "Then you're going to be the tyrant again. But who is it?"

"Guess! I'll give you three guesses. Mind, only three."

"Some other doctor?"

"No, no. What do you want with another doctor? Don't I do well enough?"

Marcia laughed. "But I couldn't think of any one else. Perhaps your mother."

"Now, Marcia, you make me laugh. My mother never visits my patients. Why should she? That makes two guesses—you have only one left."

"Oh, I know now. You mean the architect."

"No, indeed! Now you've had all your guesses."

"You certainly are a tyrant," pouted Marcia, as her arms tightened round his neck.

"Remember that I want you to put on that dress that I like best to-morrow to receive my friend. He's about my age. You'll like him. Now, I want a lock of your hair, darling. Let Ethel cut off this little curl under your ear. Yes, that's it. Thank you."

"Here's a little envelope where it'll just fit in," said Ethel.

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“Now, Marcia, you put it in this inside pocket yourself,” he added.

Again the foot was dressed, and again Ethel read in the doctor’s face a mystery.

“Now, darling, kiss me good-bye,” he said.

Still he lingered, even after Marcia had released her hold of him. There was still the alluring, bewitching fascination about her, also the consciousness of her devotion to him, held him for the moment till the clock striking called him to himself.

Then he motioned to Ethel as he left the room. She followed him out. “Keep her mind off the foot,” he said. “Get her to work on another plan,—anything to take her attention.” Then as if to himself, “I give it only two months,” and he hurried away.

Two months! What did that mean? The more Ethel pondered over the words, the more she was puzzled.

* * * * *

“Ethel, listen. I’m going to make the doctor take a long rest and we will go traveling.”

“Don’t make too sure of having your own way in everything,” was the answer. “I know you’ll find out that he has a will of his own. Remember that I’ve known him a great deal longer than you have.” There was triumph in her tone which the nurse would have given worlds to recall.

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Marcia looked at her with that earnest gaze of hers. A half frightened look came into her eyes as she said, while her lips trembled a little, "Do you mean that he won't want to please me by and bye, Ethel?" The nurse's heart was touched, and throwing her arms round the dear girl, she cried, "Oh, let me take it all back? He'll do anything to please you. You'll be very happy."

"But you're crying, Ethel. I tire you out, don't I?"

"No, I got nervous with that little boy."

* * * * *

"I can tell that you've had a bad night," said the doctor as he leaned over Marcia.

"And she wouldn't let me give her the morphine," said Ethel.

"That was wrong, Marcia. You make your nurse disobey orders."

"I was afraid. I've heard of people getting the habit of it, and I thought how dreadful it would be if you had a wife who was a morphine fiend."

The doctor laughed. "No fear of you're getting the habit, Marcia. You're too high-minded for that. I'll bring round an auto this evening, and take you and Miss Jewett for a spin. You'll sleep all the better for it. Be sure to put on that tailor made suit of yours."

"Which one? I have several."

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“The one you wore when I first saw you. I think it was dark green, and that merry widow hat of yours.”

“Which one? I have three merry widows.”

“Oh, I mean the one with the red roses all round it.”

“You mean poppies, not roses.”

“Do I? All right, the poppy hat then at seventy-three, mind.” The color came into her face and she laughed. It was just what he wanted.

“I see when any mention of the doctors is made in the *Gazette*, your name is always put first, and that pleases me so much.” He smiled. “Very small things please you, Marcia.”

“They’re not small to me. I tried to finish the plan.”

“I see you did, but you forgot the chimneys.”

“I turned the sun parlor into your office.”

“It will be so comfortable that I shall never want to go out. That will suit you, won’t it?”

She gave him the sealed envelope containing her will. “Take good care of this,” she said as she put it in his pocket.

“Of course I shall, but what is it?”

“Are you tired to-day?” she asked.

“Oh, I’m always tired,” he replied as he threw himself into a chair.

Her eyes moistened. “I’m going to make you

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have an assistant by and bye, so you can't work so hard," she said.

"Don't put him in my sun parlor. I won't have him there. But I have my mind on a very good fellow. He can go on the cold side of the house and Ethel will look after him. He's had his eye on Ethel for some time."

"Is that really so?" inquired Marcia.

"Of course it is. Did Ethel never tell you? I'm surprised.

"Do tell me his name," said Marcia.

"Oh, I mustn't. Ask Ethel."

"Ethel, will you tell me?"

"There's nothing to tell, Miss Marcia. The doctor's only joking. There's not one there that I'd give a thought to."

The doctor laughed.

"Did you make me that water-color of our cottage that is to be?"

"Yes, here it is. But I couldn't do it very well.

"Oh, that's not so bad. But what are those objects in front?"

"They are two jardinières, but the paint ran together."

"Oh, I thought they were Ethel and my assistant going to run away together. Now, kiss me good-bye. If you're going to cry, I won't come this evening."

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“Well, I won’t, if you’ll just stay five more minutes by the clock. I’ll watch, if you’ll turn your face this way.”

“Oh, I can’t trust you, you witch, you’re not honest enough. No, I’ll watch the clock. Just five minutes, then.”

A smile beamed over the sweet face, but he saw that her eyes were filling and he folded her in his strong embrace.

Then he was silent awhile, and his face grew serious, as he sat looking toward the foot. “My poor darling. You have been so brave. It will soon be well.” He kissed her forehead, her hair, the long, dark lashes that rested on her cheek, the last kiss lingering on her lips.

The nurse watched from the window when the doctor went out, as was her wont. This was something Marcia could not rob her of, and for the moment he was all her own. She saw him leave the hotel, and going over to the electric light he took the envelope from his pocket and stood reading it. Then he pressed it to his lips, and the next instant tore it into bits and gave them to the winds.

* * * * *

The doctor held Marcia in his arms, her head resting on his breast.

“And so my reverend friend came and told you what I could not?” he said.

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“Yes, and I understand it all now. And I’m glad that I’ve kept my foot even if it has been so naughty, and given you so much trouble. I shouldn’t like to go into the next world mutilated. Yes, he told me a beautiful story where the parents lost their only child, a dear little boy, with diphtheria, and their strong love for each other was the only thing that helped them live through their great affliction. He told me how human love could overcome grief and lighten pain. But your eyes are wet. Let me kiss them. It won’t be many more times. And you took care of that paper I gave you?”

“What paper, dear?”

“Why, my will.”

He was silent awhile. Then he said, “Marcia, I prefer to win my own way in the world. A man appreciates most what he struggles for.” She started back. “But you must! You must take it! I wish it so much!”

“Yes, yes. Of course. That will be all right. Listen, darling. Would you like me to make a vow to you to remain a celibate?”

“What, for your lifetime?”

“Yes, for my lifetime, Marcia.”

She drew his face down to hers. “Oh, no. I love you too well for that. I won’t be so selfish. But there’ll be a niche in your memory for me always,

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won't there? And, I like to think that no other woman will ever love you as much as I have," she said.

"No one will ever do so, my own darling. They could not."

"No one could have the same reason."

"Of course not."

* * * * *

Marcia's couch was surrounded with the largest of white lilies. Her beautiful eyes closed in the last sleep.

Ethel, the faithful nurse, was arranging the flowers. She wouldn't let anyone else touch them.

"Now, Marcia, a kiss to you because you wouldn't let him make that vow, for if he had, he would have kept it, though I'm sure it was only his sympathies—nothing more. Notwithstanding the vigor and strength of his manhood, in his sympathies he has the heart of a woman."

There was the sound of footsteps and a walking cane on the polished floor, and old Mr. Crane came shuffling in, followed by the doctor.

"Now, doctor," he began in his blunt way, "I'm going to leave here, so you had better send me your bill."

"There's no bill, sir, only a memory," was the answer.

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Turning to the nurse, he asked, "Do you return to the hospital, Miss Jewett?"

"Yes," she replied.

He looked at his watch. "We can catch the next trolley down. Let me take your valise."

They walked down the road together to wait for the trolley.

Ethel doesn't mind waiting. Why should she? She no longer puts her pillow at the window to dry when she gets up in the morning, for the peach bloom has returned to her cheek, and the light to her violet eyes.

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PART II .

CHAPTER I.

“Well, doc, I’m off to the Philippines. I’ve got an appointment.”

“You have? What about your wife?”

“Oh, that’s the very thing that’s brought me here. I want to ask you to look in upon her once in a while—I suppose she’ll be awfully lonesome at first, but she must visit round among our friends and entertain now and then. I’m leaving her pretty well fixed, you know—she won’t want for anything.”

The young doctor looked at him for awhile in silence, a stern expression passing over his countenance.

“Jack Appleton, I’m surprised,” he said at last. “You ought not to have married the woman unless you could take her with you or stay at home and give the thing right up. You expect to be gone three years, don’t you?”

“Well, about that, but——”

“I could no more have married a woman and then stay away from her for three years—for three

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months even—than cut my throat,” added the doctor.

“Well, perhaps not. You have your own ideas, of course,” he added, feeling rather sheepish.

“In the first place your wife isn’t the kind that ought to be left to select her friends—she doesn’t discriminate, and if you want your family to respect her, you ought to stay and protect her from that objectionable set that’s trying to force themselves upon her.”

“Oh, I spoke to her about them and told her I wouldn’t have it. She knows my opinion of them. You see, one of them boarded where we did and belonged to a vaudeville company, and that was how it began. I’ve asked my cousin Helen Raymond to look in upon her all she can. Helen’s a splendid girl. Why, you remember her. I used to think you were all broke up on her. Is it possible that you have forgotten those lovely dark, laughing eyes of hers? What can you be made of? Anyway, you succeeded in keeping all the other fellows away from her, didn’t you? But what nurse’s picture is that over your desk?”

“That’s my best friend,” answered the doctor.

“Why don’t you say your best girl and be done with it? Oh, I know her, Ethel Jewett, a right nice-looking girl, too. Yes, I heard about you and Ethel. In a town like this news flies, you know.”

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He stood still looking at the portrait. "Seems to me, you get more than your share, old fellow. Yes, a sweet pretty girl is Ethel."

The doctor smiled. It's always gratifying to a man to see his lady-love through the admiration of another man's eyes.

"Well, I must be off, and you'll look in on Emma when you can, won't you? Of course I'll write very often. I suppose it was rather a stupid thing to do," he added reflectively, "but I hated to see her flirting with that Bob Remington, and I knew to get married would stop it."

An amused smile passed over the doctor's face. "Yours is a queer philosophy, Appleton," he said, as he bade him good-bye.

The young doctor sat musing. Finally he said to himself, "I ought to tell Ethel. She has a right to know it. She might hear it from some one else—I'd rather she would hear it from me." He put on his hat and walked out.

* * * * *

"Well, Mrs Jewett, here I am again. Where is Ethel?" and the doctor threw himself into a chair.

"She'll soon be back, but she didn't expect you or she wouldn't have gone—I'm sure."

"That's so, I'm ahead of time, but I want to tell her something, and it wouldn't keep."

A kindly smile lighted up the face of the widow.

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“And may I be here, too?” and she put her hand on his shoulder.

He was silent awhile. Then he answered, “I prefer to tell Ethel alone.”

The widow laughed. “I guess she’ll tell me afterwards. You see I’ve been a widow ever since Ethel was two years old and I’m more like a sister to her. We do everything together. Here she is.”

Ethel now came bounding in singing in her low, sweet, rippling voice. “What, so soon here again?” she said. “Something told me that you would be here to-day. That was mental telepathy, wasn’t it?”

After her warm greeting, she sat down on an ottoman, clasped her hands over her knee and looked up in his face with that perfect trustfulness of a child, saying, “You know how glad I am when you can give me an extra half hour, don’t you? But what have you been doing to yourself. You look awfully serious.”

“I feel so. I want to talk to you, Ethel. Won’t you come nearer? I want to tell you a story. Do you know Miss Raymond?—Helen Raymond?”

“Oh, yes, I was one of the nurses that took care of her mother, a lovely old lady, and Miss Helen’s a charming girl.”

“Well, Ethel, I knew her when she was a school-girl. I was then a medical student. We used to

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take long tramps together Saturday afternoons. She was a merry, laughing, teasing girl. I couldn't tell how much she cared for me, but she gave up many a matinee to go out with me, and before I knew where I was she was everything to me, for I loved her, Ethel, I loved her dearly. Then one day she didn't keep her appointment, and I received a little note saying that she thought it best for both of us that we shouldn't meet any more. That they were going to send her away to a distant college, adding, "Please don't think about me any more, please don't." I can't tell you what that was like, Ethel, for she had become a part of my very life."

"And it made you so unhappy! Oh, my poor darling, I can feel so sorry for you." She drew his head down upon her bosom and kissed his hair, his forehead, his lips, and her eyes filled.

"I can't tell you how long it was, Ethel, but for a long time I did everything mechanically. And yet if I could I wouldn't have blotted her out of my life, for it had been so sweet to know her. But in time I lived it down, and she had become like one dead and passed from me. Since then your love has been everything to me, my Ethel. Then to-day, when I heard her name, I determined to tell you."

"But why did you tell me, dear?"

"Why did I tell you, Ethel? Why, because if I

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did not it would be like coming to you with a lie upon my soul. And after telling you this, Ethel, you will love me all the same, darling?"

"Do you think anything could rob you of that? No, no."

"And you will believe me when I tell you that I love you dearly?"

"Of course I will. Far more than if you had not told me. My love, my darling, you know what you have been to me oh, such a long, long time. Let me tell you something. I've often thought of it—it is said that a man likes to be loved, and that a woman likes to love someone. I don't think you could love me in the same way as I love you," she added passionately, "but I am so happy—so perfectly satisfied. Now lie down and rest while I help mother with the supper."

"I want to take you to the big church fair to-night, Ethel, I want you to meet some of my friends."

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CHAPTER II.

As they entered the fair, a young man came up to them and holding out his hand said, "Don't you remember me, Hamilton?"

"Why, of course I do. Miss Jewett, this is Dr. Pierson. We were students together. And what are you doing here, Pierson?"

"What am I doing? Why the girls have roped me in for telling fortunes. See my grotto over there?"

"Ah, I remember that you used to be a sort of psychological genius—you told my fortune once, but it didn't come out as you predicted."

"What didn't come out? I swear I never made a mistake yet."

"Indeed you did. You said I would marry a girl with very dark eyes and dark hair, and Miss Jewett is a sort of half blonde. Isn't that so, Ethel?"

Ethel laughed and said that was about it.

Dr. Pierson was silent. Then he said, "Well, it's the first time I've made a slip up, but I see they're waiting for me."

"Miss Jewett, buy a ticket to have your fortune

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told, won't you?" said a little, bright-eyed girl.
"Only fifty cents."

"All right, Emiline, but I don't want to wait."

"You can go now."

Ethel entered the grotto. Dr. Pierson took her hand. He leaned over it. His brows contracted, and for some time he was silent. Finally he said, "You are going on a journey. You will be very happy. You will always be very happy as long as you live. I can't tell you any more, dear Miss Jewett."

"Short and sweet," and Ethel laughed her good-bye.

"Oh, Dr. Hamilton, we can't let you off. Fifty cents for the good of the cause. You must have your fortune told. Dr. Pierson's busy, but we have a Hungarian gipsy on the other side, and she's wonderful."

"Ethel, can you wait?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, but don't be long."

"You want ze cards or ze hand?" asked the sybil, as he took his seat.

"All the same to me, my dear woman," replied the doctor.

After some preliminary remarks she came to the main point of her subject, and said, "I see one who loves you so, so much, and you love her, too, but you never will marry her. You cannot. It won't

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be your fault. It won't be her fault, for you love each other dearly. The fates won't let you. I see you sitting at a table, looking over some papers, and a dark girl is by your side, her arms around your neck. She loves you dearly and you will marry her."

"Thank you. That's enough, I'm sure. Oh, Ethel, here you are, and what did you get for your fifty cents," he added laughing.

"Oh, a dear, sweet little fortune. I'm to be happy as long as I live."

"But what a pack of nonsense those people stuff you with. And the fun of it is some believe what they tell them. But what train do you take to-morrow? I do wish that you wouldn't take that case, dear. Why do you? I shall miss you so much."

"Oh, a very light case. I shall be back in three weeks."

"Why must we wait three weeks?"

"I'll tell you. I'm having a handsome dress made. Now that I am going to belong to you, I want to look stylish."

"You always look well, Ethel."

"Oh, but this is something scrumptuous, and——"

"But it gives me such a miserable unrest to have

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you so far away. But why go? You don't need the money."

"No, but they're such old friends and I promised."

"You take the eight-thirty train, I believe. Well, I'll see you off, darling."

* * * * *

"I heard that old Hungarian telling Dr. Hamilton's fortune," said the sexton's wife, as she swept up after the fair. "She told him he would never marry Ethel Jewett. But he's very fond of her, and if anything should separate them it would break her heart."

* * * * *

The next morning Ethel found the doctor waiting for her at the depot.

"I'll get your trunk checked," he said. "Mind, not a day longer than the three weeks."

The train was now at the station. He handed Ethel in and watched from the platform as the train puffed off. She threw him a kiss from the window. Finally there was only a black speck in the distance. Still he stood and watched, for it seemed to him as though the voice, the smile, the beauty of the large, earnest, violet eyes were being carried away from him into the eternities.

* * * * *

Ethel had been gone two weeks when one day

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only a penciled note reached the doctor, instead of her long, daily letter. It stated that there were two more cases of typhoid in the family and she was tired out. Every two hours the doctor used the long distance telephone to inquire. Then came the words, "The nurse is down sick. Says not to worry."

He was soon at her mother's.

"I shall go for Ethel and bring her back as soon as possible. There's a train at 7:30," he said.

There was a ring at the bell.

"I'll go," said the doctor.

It was a telegram. "Ethel Jewett died at 2:30. Send instructions."

There was a thud on the floor.

"Oh, God, what is it?" cried the mother. "Help! help!"

A letter followed later. "Ethel received your letter and the doctor's. She was very happy, and in her perfect happiness went into delirium and passed away."

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CHAPTER III.

The doctor opened his mail, among which was a small envelope that brought the perfume of fresh violets. It contained a card.

“Dear Dr. Hamilton:

“My very deepest sympathies.

“HELEN RAYMOND.”

It was so long since he had seen her hand-writing it was like a message from another world. All the pain and the pleasure came back again as though it were yesterday. She, the romping, merry girls of sixteen, meeting his love with a laughing, mischievous denial, that fascinated, while it annoyed him, and yet, so sweet in her tantalizing ways, he wouldn't have had her different if he could.

It was one of those love-passages of a life that lead no whither, like some strange, unreal fantasy, and yet it was so sweet to live it all over again. Besides, she had not forgotten him, and yet—and yet—to be always perhaps in the far-off, notwithstanding she was on the outskirts of the very same town.

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“Doctor, that's your telephone—it rang before and you didn't seem to hear it.”

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Dr. Hamilton rose and answered the call. "Yes, Jack, I'm home and will be glad to see you."

Soon after, Jack Appleton made his appearance. "Couldn't stand it out there any longer," he said. "Besides, the way you wrote me determined me to get back home. Awfully good of you, old fellow. You see Emma couldn't keep that flimsy set around her if she had some nice, companionable woman with her all the time. I did think that Helen Raymond would spend most of her time there, now she's home from college. But that Caroline, her father's second wife, has taken her about with them. Ah, she's a designing, artful woman, under the guise of the deepest maternal love for Helen. She's making my uncle spend a good deal of money bringing Helen out. They've scooped up a senator in their travels, and he now hangs round Helen a good deal. It's plain to see what Caroline is up to. I heard her talking to Helen about their living in Washington. I saw from the first that she intended to trade on Helen's good looks to get her into that set that she is hankering after, and when a fellow wants an introduction to Helen he has to get it through the step-mother. You know the Rev. Thomas Clark? He asked me to introduce him to Helen. He admires her ever so much. But I knew Caroline would snub him, and that there was no

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chance for him, and it might end in raising his hopes for nothing. So I told him as much. I felt I was doing the poor fellow a good service, but from the way he looks at me I guess he thinks otherwise."

The doctor was silent. Finally he said, "And does Miss Helen care very much for the senator?" and he busied himself with papers on his desk.

"Ah, that's a question. He is a lawyer—won that big case in Washington where Caroline's brother killed and robbed a man so cruelly who had been such a friend to him. The evidence was so strong against him that nothing short of the eloquence of Coleman could have saved him. And money of course to back it. They were talking of it at a dinner party, and Helen opened her big eyes and asked, "But did Senator Coleman know for sure that the man murdered him?" And everyone said, "Why, of course he did." She whispered to me, "I shall never feel the same to him after that." And she didn't eat much more dinner. That Caroline rules the house with a rod of iron. After dinner they were talking of the various professions and Helen remarked that in her opinion, the medical profession stood highest—higher than the church, and Caroline's eyes flashed and she scolded her and said, "What could you be thinking of to

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say that when the senator was standing by, and his uncle a bishop.”

“But who is this Coleman?”

“Why, Clarence Coleman. You must have heard of him.”

“What! that wretch?” turning sharply round. “His double life was in the papers.”

“Hush, old boy. That’s some time ago. Helen was too young to know anything about it, so she doesn’t know. Besides, they say when a man has money and a position he hasn’t any past. That is, people let it alone.”

“But her father must know and what can he be thinking of?”

“Well, his wife Caroline manages him. Then I think he has lost a good deal lately and doesn’t like to acquaint his family with it. Then Caroline is a designing woman and has set her heart on living in Washington. I imagine Helen doesn’t care so much for him as yet, but they say he has a wonderful winning way with women—seems to have had considerable experience, and so long as Helen doesn’t care for any other fellow, I guess she’ll tumble to it in the end. She’ll be different from most girls, if she doesn’t.”

The doctor was silent.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE winter had passed into summer and the summer into winter again. There was but little change in the even tenor of Dr. Hamilton's life.

One evening as he sat in his office he was pleased when the door opened to Jack Appleton. "Glad to see you, old fellow. What's the news from your part of the town?"

"Oh, nothing." He was silent awhile, then he continued, "What a mistake it was when Uncle Raymond married that Caroline. It brought such an unhealthy influence into the house. I am sorry that my cousin Helen should see the wrong side of life so early. She said to me the other evening, "I find that several of the women of Caroline's set don't live with their husbands, and several of the men don't live with their wives, and I suspect it will be like that with me and Clarence, in about three years we shall separate. I'm going into this for poor papa's sake. His money has got into a tangle with Caroline's brother, who's none too honest, I'm afraid, and there's no hope for any peace of mind for him but for us to fall into Caroline's wishes. Ah, if I had money of my own, or if I could in any way earn an income for

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both of us and take my father away! But that's impossible, and it's just an agony to think of it. Oh, well, I may stand it while papa lives, and then leave Clarence unless he gives up—well, no matter—but I shall look forward to leaving him.”

“But what a miserable life for a woman to be alone in the world and not free,” said the doctor, turning sharply round. “Your uncle is making a sacrifice of the girl. Can't you talk to him?”

“My dear fellow, the old man's on his last legs, I can see. I don't see how any talk can help the matter. The thing has to take its course.” He looked at his watch. “I promised to call for Emma at the dressmaker's. That's what brought me this side of town. Well, so long.”

When the doctor was left alone, he fell into a reverie. That Helen's case was a hopeless one was a consciousness so painful that for days and weeks it hung over him like a pall.

* * * * *

It was early in the afternoon. The doctor was seated in his office talking with an old patient.

“You look tired,” said the old gentleman. “You young doctors are often under a strain. You don't realize it, but it's there. It tells upon you. Do you get plenty of sleep, Dr. Hamilton?”

“Enough bed, perhaps, but can't always get to sleep,” and he smiled.

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When his patient had gone and he was alone, the doctor threw himself wearily upon a couch and fell into a slumber.

He dreamed that Helen was waiting for him on an embankment. He struggled to reach the spot, but his feet were shod with lead, and he could not move. He tried to call to her, but his tongue was paralyzed.

Then he found that a stream flowed between him and the embankment, and with difficulty he dragged himself to a boat and tried to row to her with all the painful intensity of a dream, but the waters carried him down the current away from her, while the winds brought her voice in passionate appeal calling to him.

Finally the nightmare passed and he awoke. Someone was calling, "The telephone for you, doctor."

He started up, took the receiver, and called, "Hello."

"Is this Dr. Hamilton?"

"Yes, who is this?"

"It's me, Jack Appleton. I'm at my uncle Raymond's. He's very ill, and our doctor can't come. Can you get here at once?"

"Yes, I'll come at once."

On reaching the house, he found Mr. Raymond in a fit beyond all medical aid.

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“It’s simply worry that has killed him, doctor,” said Caroline, with a sharp look at Helen, who was standing over her father and stroking his hands.

When all was over and nothing more could be done, the doctor and Jack Appleton sat in the library. The doctor was gazing round on the various objects that were so familiar to him when he used to sit there waiting for Helen in those days when they took their long tramps together.

Presently old Chloe, the colored nurse who had been with Helen since she was a baby, put her head in at the door and said, “Doct’ Hamilton’ ’pears as tho’ Mis’ Helen needs a doctor worse’n anybody else. I can’t quiet her no how, guess you might give her somethun, an’ she didn’t eat nuffin fo’ two days now.”

The doctor took his satchel and followed her to Helen’s room. Her face was smothered in her pillow and sobs shook her frame. He laid his hand on her shoulder, and leaning over her, said, “Miss Raymond—Helen, won’t you let me speak to you? Listen, Helen. I want to thank you for your word of sympathy that came to me when I was in so much trouble, when I lost my friend! You see I know what it is to be called upon to suffer. I was ill awhile or I would have acknowledged it, and

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when I got well, you had gone travelling, and it was too late.”

Presently Helen controlled herself, and turning her face toward him held out her hand, saying, “Oh, I was so sorry, very sorry for you.”

“This water-bag has slipped down, let me adjust it. There! Isn’t that better? Don’t you want this other pillow?”

“Thank you; that’s so much more comfortable. Doctor, you remind me of something I read once. What do you suppose it was?”

“I’m sure I don’t know—you tell me.”

“I read it in one of papa’s old books. That a physician’s hands are the gentlest among men next to a woman’s.”

“Is that so? Well, that’s the way it ought to be, isn’t it?”

She riveted her large, sad eyes upon him and a half-smile passed over the pale face.

The day had faded into evening when Chloe came in with tea and toast.

“Here’s ’nough fo’ you, too, Doctor. I knows well ’nough how you used to come here, don’t I? Make her eat jis a morful, de po’ chile’s all broke up.”

Soon after the doctor took his leave of Helen, saying, “Now whenever I can be of further use, Miss Raymond, you will call upon me, won’t you?”

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CHAPTER V.

“Dr. Hamilton, you’re wanted at the ’phone.”

“Hello, who is it?”

“Is this Dr. Hamilton?”

“Yes, Dr. Hamilton.”

“This is Helen—Helen Raymond. You said I might call on you, Doctor, and everything seems in such a tangle, I don’t know where to begin. Poor papa couldn’t attend to any of his affairs lately, and his old lawyer, Mr. Bowen, is dead, and the sons don’t seem to care to help us out. Could you really give us a little of your time to look over his papers with me? I can’t understand some of them. Most of the securities, I’m afraid, are worthless.”

* * * * *

The doctor and Helen were sitting in the library, the large table before them covered with documents.

“Are these the papers you want looked at?” he asked.

There was a rustle of skirts and Mrs. Raymond stood before them. “Have you sent to the lawyers, Helen?”

“Not yet, we’re trying to get things into shape.

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I hope there'll be enough to settle with everyone and clear papa's name of debt."

"Debt, indeed. I should think I ought to come in somewhere. I should like to know what I've gained by marrying your father."

"I told you, Caroline, that I didn't want anything. I can find something to do. Dr. Hamilton, don't you think I might take a nurse's course?"

"Well, let us give our attention to these now. We'll speak of that bye-an-bye," he answered quietly.

"Well, Helen, I want to know as soon as I can how I stand," continued Caroline as she walked away.

"Now, as I understand it, these will pay your outstanding bills, and——"

"You see I nursed poor papa so long under Dr. Brown's care that I'd better be a nurse, and——"

"Now these D., L. & W. are all right—there's no better. I'll add them up."

"Could I make a start here at one of the hospitals for training, or must I go to one of the big cities?" she asked.

"Oh, you're thinking of the nurse again. Suppose we finish this business first," and he looked up this time and smiled as their eyes met.

"I've interrupted you again, haven't I? But I

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won't do it any more. Pardon me," and she laid her hand on his arm.

He looked down at the figures again.

"That's the first time I've seen you smile like that in a long, long time," she said.

He worked on in silence. Helen, sitting opposite him, her hands clasped on the table watching him, her eyes wandering over him from his hair down to his hands that rested on the papers. It seemed to her that all the painful past was bridged over and they were back in the time when they first knew each other. It was a silence filled with so many memories. The painful monotony of her life had ceased and she would launch out into a new world and he was the only one who could tell her just what to do.

At last the doctor drew a breath of relief and sat back in his chair. "This is what I make it?" he said, turning round the paper for her to read.

"Is that all? The interest on that won't bring her in enough to satisfy her, I'm afraid. But then, when this house is sold it will bring something."

"Your father didn't make a will?"

"Oh, yes, but what's the use of it, when he had lost nearly everything. Of course, I have a pride about it. I don't want to have her talk against my father for leaving her nothing. As for myself, I'm so delighted at the thought of entering the activi-

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ties of life, I feel quite proud already to know that I shall be one of the great army of workers in the world's laboring classes. I have looked out of the window of a morning and watched the people hastening to their work and envied them. They must feel so independent and so happy."

The doctor smiled. "Many of them do, no doubt," he answered. "But let us come back to business. First of all, the law allows Mrs. Raymond a third, which she'll demand of course. Then you intend to add to it, all there is—or likely to be. Now, why not make this a life-interest. I should advise this above all things, otherwise she may will it away as soon as it's in her possession."

"I never thought of that."

"I'm sure your father would have considered this the just thing to do under the circumstances."

"Here is Chloe with some tea."

"Now I've numbered the papers and your lawyer will find them all together. Also the bills are together. Here they are."

"Thank you so much. Now when can you come again, and we will talk over the nurse question."

"But, Miss Helen, you must understand there's a great deal yet to be done. Your house and furniture are to be sold. I would advise you giving these matters your attention first."

"Oh, dear, yes, but I do feel that I can't wait."

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Their eyes met again and they both laughed. "Women haven't the cool deliberation that men have, have they?" she said. We like to rush into things, don't we? But, really, I've been schooling myself lately and economizing and found it is no hardship at all."

"It's wonderful how many things we find we can do without, when we haven't the money to buy them," he said.

Then they both laughed again.

"I feel sure I shall succeed," she said again, alluding to her future vocation. "I've read somewhere that the gifts of life are not for those who endeavor, but for those who endure, and I have been so unhappy. You don't know, but it's all over now."

He looked at his watch.

"Yes, I've kept you so long, haven't I?" she continued. "I know I can't thank you enough," and she held out both her hands. They were beautiful hands too, supple, long-fingered, rosy-tipped; and something of the old, tantalizing fascination took possession of him again as the witchery of her dark eyes fastened upon him and held him again as it did long ago when he was a student and met her for the first time, when all was so illusive, so visionary. "To have you here again seems like the long ago come back," she said.

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Was it not Browning who said: "There are smiles so genuine, so sweet, they carry an invisible kiss with them that lingers long after, like the radiant after-glow of a glorious sunset,—yet with that fugitive intangible charm!"

Night was wrapping the town in her shroud when the doctor left.

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CHAPTER VI.

“Oh, Helen, don’t be away again, when I come home. It seems so lonely without you,” the doctor said.

“Does it? Well, I’ve been to see Mrs. Jewett, and it was farther than I thought.”

“What? All that way? No wonder you’re so out of breath. It’s a tremendous hill. It was too long a walk for you. You must lie down and rest.”

“No, I want to see about the dinner. That girl can’t do anything alone. She is only a machine.”

“You shall not go into the kitchen again to-day. I’ll look after the machinery, and don’t you take such a walk again.”

“But I want to make a sauce. I’ve been trying a new receipt. It won’t take long. I left everything ready.”

“I’ll make the sauce.”

“No, you’ll spoil it.”

“Let me take off your boots. There, now you can lie down and take a nap till I call you to dinner. I shall lock your door. If the sauce isn’t right, I’ll eat it all. Let me loosen your dress. Let go. I can do it.”

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“Mrs. Jewett said you were there last week. Why didn’t you tell me?”

“I forgot, darling. I run in whenever I’m up there.”

“She said you are just like a son to her. But she made me laugh for she asked me if I loved you as you deserved. So to satisfy her I told her what a silly girl I used to be when they wouldn’t let me see you any more—how I used to steal down at night when every one was in bed and kiss the cold marble in the hall where your coat used to hang and then cry myself to sleep till I thought my heart would break. She asked me if Ethel’s picture still hung in your office, and I said it would be there as long as I lived because she loved you, and she said, ‘The doctor was very fond of Ethel,’ and I told her I should be ashamed of you if you hadn’t been, and I said I had intended to be a nurse, only you were so lonely you wouldn’t let me. Then I told her that if we had a daughter we would call her Ethel.

“But suppose it should not be a daughter,” she said, raising her eyebrows.

“Well, then, it will have to be a son, I told her, and we are going to name him Ethelbert, a good old Saxon name, and we shall call him Ethel for short. This touched her so that she threw her arms round me and hugged and kissed me.”

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“And I must follow her example. Oh, Helen, you don’t know what you are to me! Queer that Jack Appleton could stay away from his wife so long. Hope he has found out by this time that love’s the highest form of human happiness.”

Helen laughed. “You seem to have found it so anyway. After all, it’s the simplest things that please us most— isn’t it?”

“Now, darling, get to sleep. I shall go and try my hand at that sauce.”

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